

Washington, DC- Today House Veteran's Affairs Committee member Congressman **Ciro D. Rodriguez** (TX-23) announced passage in the House of two of his bills that would further allow us to keep the promises made to our veterans. The *Veterans Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) Act of 2008* (HR 5826) would increase the rates of disability and survivor benefits for our nation's veterans. Additionally, a bill that would help with construction or renovation of housing for disabled veterans (HR 5664) also passed. The bills are part of Rodriguez's 2008 Veterans Aid Package.

"Our veterans have made difficult sacrifices, and secured our freedom and way of life. This Memorial Day, I am honoring veterans in Texas and throughout the country with my words and actions by helping to pass the bills which I have sponsored," said Rodriguez. "The COLA will help our veterans by providing better compensation for disabled veterans and survivor families, some of whom depend on these benefits as their only source of income."

The COLA is necessary for thousands of disabled veterans and survivor families, many of who depend on disability and survivor benefits as their sole source of income. The adjustment is tied to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) which is to be determined after the third quarter of the year. The CPI has averaged a 4.39% annual increase from 1975-2007. Last year's increase was 2.3%. U.S. Senator Daniel Akaka (D-HI) has sponsored a matching measure in the Senate that is expected to pass easily and be signed in to law by the President.

HR 5664 is a bill to correct an oversight in the way the VA advises contractors constructing or renovating housing for disabled veterans. The bill would ensure that disabled veterans whose homes are updated or built benefit from all possible modern technology and construction practices.

"We must give our veterans the best possible resources for when they return to civilian life," continued Rodriguez. "Many of the veterans who are surviving horrible injuries were not surviving from these same injuries the last time we were at war. We need the most effective guidelines for adaptable housing so that disabled veterans may have a suitable place to live."

The guidelines for renovating housing for disabled veterans have not been updated since 1978. The bill will now be sent to the Senate for consideration.

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Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez is a former social worker who currently serves on the House Committee on Veterans Affairs and the powerful House Committee on Appropriations. For more information on Congressman Rodriguez please visit <http://rodriguez.house.gov/>